II. Claim Amendment

1-11. (canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A contact plate for fuel cells comprising:

a coherent active area on at least one side of the contact plate, wherein said side is for contacting at least one of a diffusion layer, a fuel cell electrode and an electrolyte membrane; and

a coating of an electrically conductive, corrosion resistant material;

wherein said contact plate is constructed from passivating, corrosion-resistant metal;

wherein said active area includes a contact surface and recesses, such that said recesses form a channel structure;

wherein said coating includes carbon ~~and one of a thermoplastic and a thermoset binding agent~~ for depositing in liquid form, and said coating is disposed only on said contact surface of said active area.

13. (Previously Presented) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein said contact plate is constructed from one of a stainless steel and a titanium.

14. (Previously Presented) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein said coating extends over the entire said contact surface.

15. (Cancelled).

16. (Previously Presented) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein said contact plate further includes an edge region, said edge region being outside of said active area.

17. (Cancelled).

18. (Cancelled).

19. (Previously Presented) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein said carbon is in the form of graphite.

20. (Previously Presented) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein said coating further includes at least one of a niobium, a rare earth metal, a precious metal, a metal boride, a metal nitride, a metal carbide, a titanium nitride, a titanium carbide, a chromium nitride, and a silicon carbide.

21. (Cancelled).

22. (Previously Presented) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein said contact plate has a material thickness between about 0.05 mm and about 0.5 mm.

23. (Previously Presented) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein said contact plate has a material thickness between about 0.07 mm and about 0.2 mm.

24. (Previously Presented) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein said contact plate is one of a monopolar and a bipolar plate.

25. (Previously Presented) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein said contact plate is an end plate.

26. (Cancelled).

27. (Withdrawn) A method of making a contact plate for fuel cells comprising the steps of:constructing said contact plate from a passivating, corrosion-resistant metal, a coherent active area on at least one side of said contact plate including a contact surface and recesses, said recesses forming a channel structure, said side being contactable by at least one of a diffusion layer, a fuel cell electrode and an electrolyte membrane; anddepositing a coating of an electrically conductive, corrosion-resistant material including carbon and one of a thermoplastic and a thermoset binding agent for depositing in liquid form upon said contact surface of the contact plate, said coating being disposed only on said contact surface.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27, further including the limitation of depositing said coating on said contact surface by one of a screen printing, a roller printing, and a metering method.

29. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, further including the limitation of the one of said screen printing, said roller printing, and said metering method being maskless at said recesses.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27, further including the step of heating said contact plate, said heating of said contact plate performs at least one of a melting and a curing of said coating.

31. (New) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein said coating includes one of a thermoplastic and a thermoset binding agent.

32. (New) The contact plate of claim 12, wherein in areas without said coating, said metallic contact plate has a passive surface.

33. (New) The contact plate of claim 32, wherein said areas without said coating are said recesses.